

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 EB-08 OMB-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 /088 W
-----006051 031200Z /53

R 030839Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0193
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 5574

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGSS: PEPR, CH, VM
SUBJ: WORSENING SINO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS

REF: A) PEKING 1225; B) HONG KONG 5409

1. ALREADY STRAINED SINO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS HAVE BEEN FURTHER EXACERBATED BY SRV MOVES AGAINST THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN VIETNAM. THE EXTENT OF THE TENSION WAS DEMONSTRATED BY THE RATHER STRONG PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON APRIL 30 BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE OVERSEAS CHINESE AFFAIRS OFFICE LIAO CHENG-CHIH. LIAO ANNOUNCED THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF CHINESE RESIDING IN VIETNAM SUDDENLY BEGAN RETURNING TO CHINA RECENTLY AND THAT CHINA IS CONCERNED ABOUT THIS AND IS CLOSELY FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS.

2. WE BELIEVE THE EXODUS REACHING THE PRC IS COMPOSED MAINLY OF CHINESE RESIDENTS FROM HANOI AND HAIPHONG, A HONG KONG BUSINESSMAN TOLD US THAT A CHINESE RESTAURANTEUR IN HANOI RECENTLY COMPLAINED TO HIM THAT HIS TAXES HAD

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INCREASED IN MARCH FROM DONG 600 PER MONTH TO 2500 AND THAT MANY SMALL CHINESE BUSINESSMEN WERE BEING SQUEEZED OUT. IN ADDITION TO THIS NORTHERN FLIGHT TO CHINA, THE MARCH 23 CLAMP DOWN ON "BOURGEOIS" (READ CHINESE) TRADERS IN SAIGON MAY SPARK A RENEWED EXODUS OF BOAT REFUGEES FROM THE SOUTH.

3. THE DETERIORATING SINO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONSHIP
VIRTUALLY ELIMINATES ANY REMAINING POSSIBILITY OF CHINA
PLAYING A MEDIATORY ROLE IN THE CAMBODIAN-VIETNAMESE
CONFLICT. IT ALSO SEEMS LIKELY THAT MOUNTING TROUBLES
TO THE SOUTH WILL REINFORCE CHINA'S APPRECIATION OF THE
VALUE AT THIS TIME OF A VIABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
U.S. CONVERSELY, IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO SPECULATE THAT
THE SOURING OF ITS RELATIONS WITH CHINA WILL LEAD VIETNAM
TOWARD MORE POSITIVE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH
THE U.S. TO AVOID COMPLETE RELIANCE ON THE SOVIETS.
ONE HARBINGER OF THIS MIGHT BE HANOI'S RECENT
INVITATION TO AN AMERICAN CHAMBER DELEGATION FROM HONG
KONG TO VISIT HANOI (REF B)
LEVIN

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